
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

HB 2915

Brief Description: Removing limit on ethics board penalties and costs.

Sponsors: Representatives Rodne, Ross and Hurst; by request of Attorney General.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows an ethics board to consider penalties and costs in excess of \$500 even if an administrative law judge is not used.

Hearing Date: 2/1/08

Staff: Tracey Taylor (786-7196).

Background:

Legislators, agency heads and the judiciary are covered by the Ethics in Public Service Act (Act) in Chapter 42.52 RCW. Each branch of government has their own ethics board: the Legislative Ethics Board, the Executive Ethics Board and the Commission on Judicial Conduct.

Upon the filing of an ethics complaint, the appropriate ethics board investigates the complaint. If the ethics board determines there is reasonable cause that a violation of the Act has occurred, a public hearing on the merits must be held. The ethics board should also consider the possibility that the alleged violator may have to pay penalties and costs in excess of \$500. In such a case, the board may give the alleged violator the option of having an administrative law judge conduct the hearing and rule on evidentiary and procedural matters. The board can also, on its own initiative, retain an administrative law judge. If the ethics board does not retain an administrative law judge and does not give the alleged violator the option of having an administrative law judge retained, the ethics board cannot require a total payment of penalties and costs in excess of \$500.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

An ethics board may require penalties and costs in excess of \$500 even if the option for an administrative law judge is not given to the alleged violator and the ethics board chooses not to retain an administrative law judge on its own initiative.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.